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SUBJECT: USG-SPONSORED DISASTER EXERCISE SUPPORTS  
INDONESIAN RESPONSE TO WILDFIRES

¶1. (U) This message was coordinated with Consulate Medan.

¶2. (U) SUMMARY: The U.S. Army-led 2009 Disaster Response Exchange and Exercise (DREE), conducted in Riau Province, Sumatra, focused on response and prevention policies for wild land fires. Riau Province is Sumatra's ground zero for such fires, which have been raging recently. The DREE enhanced Indonesian humanitarian and disaster response capabilities and cooperation between the U.S. and Indonesian militaries. It also furthered Mission's Strategic Plan Climate and Biodiversity goals on carbon emissions and sustainable forestry management. END SUMMARY.

#### EXERCISE IN SUMATRA

¶3. (U) U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) personnel conducted the 2009 Disaster Response Exchange and Exercise DREE) for Indonesia in Pekanbaru, Riau Province, Sumatra, from July 27 to 31. The program focused on response to and prevention of wildfires and consisted of two days of reciprocal briefings, followed by two days of command post and field training exercises.

¶4. (U) The exercises were well-attended, with 350 Indonesian participants representing 33 government agencies or private companies. In addition, 133 Indonesians attended the exchange conference. The DREE was conducted by ten USARPAC personnel, and one from the Hawaii Army National Guard, one from Pacific Command, and one from Pacific Air Force.

#### GOOD FOR MIL-TO-MIL COOPERATION

¶5. (U) The DREE enhanced security cooperation by creating an opportunity for USARPAC to interact directly with one of the Indonesian Army's Military Regional Commands (KODAMs). Likewise, it provided a forum for enhancing internal Indonesian cooperation among a variety of military, GOI, and private sector entities, all working together to test the Riau Provincial Governor's disaster response plan.

#### WORKING TO CONSERVE FORESTS AND REDUCE EMISSIONS

¶6. (U) The subject matter for this DREE was chosen not only as a means of enhancing mil-to-mil relations and domestic Indonesian humanitarian assistance and disaster response capabilities, but also because of the environmental and economic impact of the problem. Traditional slash and burn agricultural methods are the primary cause of wild land fires. Those fires destroy cultivated plants and trees and cause thick smoke that creates health concerns, disrupts air traffic, and degrades air quality in Indonesia and

neighboring countries.

**¶7.** (U) Riau Province is Sumatra's ground zero for such fires. These fires have been raging recently (see septel). The DREE exchanges and exercises thus furthered Jakarta's Mission Strategic Plan Climate and Biodiversity goals of conserving forests and reducing carbon emissions.

HUME